(U) New Technology Making Waves: MMS

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(U) Multimedia Messaging Service, or MMS, is a messaging service allowing users to exchange any or all of the following: text, sound, pictures, and video. No doubt you've seen advertisements of MMS-capable phones, some of which are called camera phones.

(S//SI) Although hindered by interoperability issues, which are slowly dwindling, MMS-capable networks and handsets are now available in many countries around the globe, with Africa and the Middle East lagging behind. We know many of our targets possess phones capable of sending and receiving MMS, and we've seen direct evidence of its use by specific targets. With this in mind, the question arises: "Can we get SIGINT from it?" Unfortunately, the current answer is, "Not yet;" however, steps are being taken to rectify this. These steps include the development of:

- an automated collection and processing capability for traffic from MMS-carrying networks -- MMS requires more bandwidth than Second Generation (2G) cellular systems, such as GSM. Currently, the predominant mobile network capable of carrying MMS is General Packet Radio Service (GPRS), which is considered a 2.5 Generation (2.5G) network. S3 is heading an effort to build an architecture to process GPRS data, and they are currently preparing to test key processing threads.

- an automated capability to extract and process MMS that is embedded in GPRS data -- S3 is about 85% finished in developing this capability.

- a database and interface for storage, retrieval and viewing of MMS -- for those familiar with Short Messaging Service, this is analogous to building a DISHFIRE-like tool for MMS. This will be challenging, because MMS utilizes many different formats for each media: text, sound, picture and video. There is currently an A&P Analytic Need to provide such a tool, but development has not yet started.

(S//SI) As MMS is a relatively new technology, it is important to document which targets are using MMS, and for what purposes. That information can then be used to determine the right priority level for the development of capabilities to exploit MMS. If you are a SIGINT analyst, you can help! If you suspect that your target uses MMS, please send any relevant information -- including what the target is and how you suspect it is using MMS -- to ███████ ███████@nsa.

(U//FOUO) An MMS solution is on the way, hopefully sooner rather than later.